(e) the steps proposed to cancel all such agreements by MPEDA involving distracting activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) is only a member of the Working Group set up by the Ministry of Agriculture - the nodal Ministry for monitoring and implementation of resolutions of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). MPEDA participates in the meetings of the Group only as and when invited.

(c) to (e) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Ban on import of rice of phyto-sanitary grounds by Russia

1681. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia has banned the import of rice from India on phyto-sanitary and sanitary grounds;

(b) whether Government has ascertained the objections by Russian importers;

(c) if so, whether such objections are in the conformity with the WTO regulations in this respect; and

(d) what steps are being taken to remove such non-tariff restrictions on the Indian farm exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, sir. It has been ascertained from the Russian authorities that the ban was on account of detection of Aflatoxin and inadmissible levels of pesticide residues.

(c) Russia has not yet acceded to the WTO and is therefore not obliged to comply with of WTO regulations.

(d) Following the steps taken by the Government to sign a protocol, the ban on export of rice has been lifted with effect from 20th July, 2007.

Probe into cartelisation of cement industry by MRTPC

1682. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC) is probing cartelisation of cement industry and jacking up cement prices in the domestic market;

(b) whether the MRTPC is not empowered to impose penalties and enforce disciplinary action against the cartel member and whether MRTPC cannot go beyond issuing a 'cease and desist' order; and